

NSC BRIEFING

4 March 1959

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REVIEWER: []
THE SUDAN

- I. Growing dissension within the Supreme Council and increasing dissatisfaction with the govt by troop commanders came to a head in an attempted coup last Monday.
 - A. The coup organizers reportedly were the commanders of the Northern and Eastern commands who took advantage of a major troop rotation to make their move.
 - B. The coup leaders temporarily "arrested" Major General Wahab and three other Supreme Council members, all of whom are members of the Ansar religious sect and adherents of former prime minister Khalil's Umma party, but later released them to attend a meeting of the Supreme Council.
 - C. After stormy debate in which Abboud threatened to resign and Supreme Council membership split nearly fifty-fifty, Council finally compromised by ordering the conspirators back to their commands while rejecting their demands for seats on the Council in place of Wahab and his friends.
 - D. However, Wednesday morning troops of the Northern Command, presumably under orders from its commander, occupied strategic points in the Khartoum area.
 - E. This was followed on Wednesday afternoon by the resignation of the members of the Supreme Council who in so doing gave Premier Abboud a vote of confidence to form a new Council.
 - F. Meanwhile, Abboud has called a meeting of all military commanders for today (Thursday).

- II. Abboud faces difficult task in trying to reconstitute government.
 - A. Coup events have intensified behind-the-scenes struggle between the Ansar and the Khatmia--the two important religious sects.
 - B. UAR will probably try to exploit unstable situation through those political party leaders which it subsidizes and through those army officers who favor pro-Egyptian policies.
 - C. Extreme seriousness of economic situation represents built-in handicap to any revised Sudanese government.